

Teaching^{the} Whole Counsel of God:

Why Systematic Bible
Teaching Is Essential

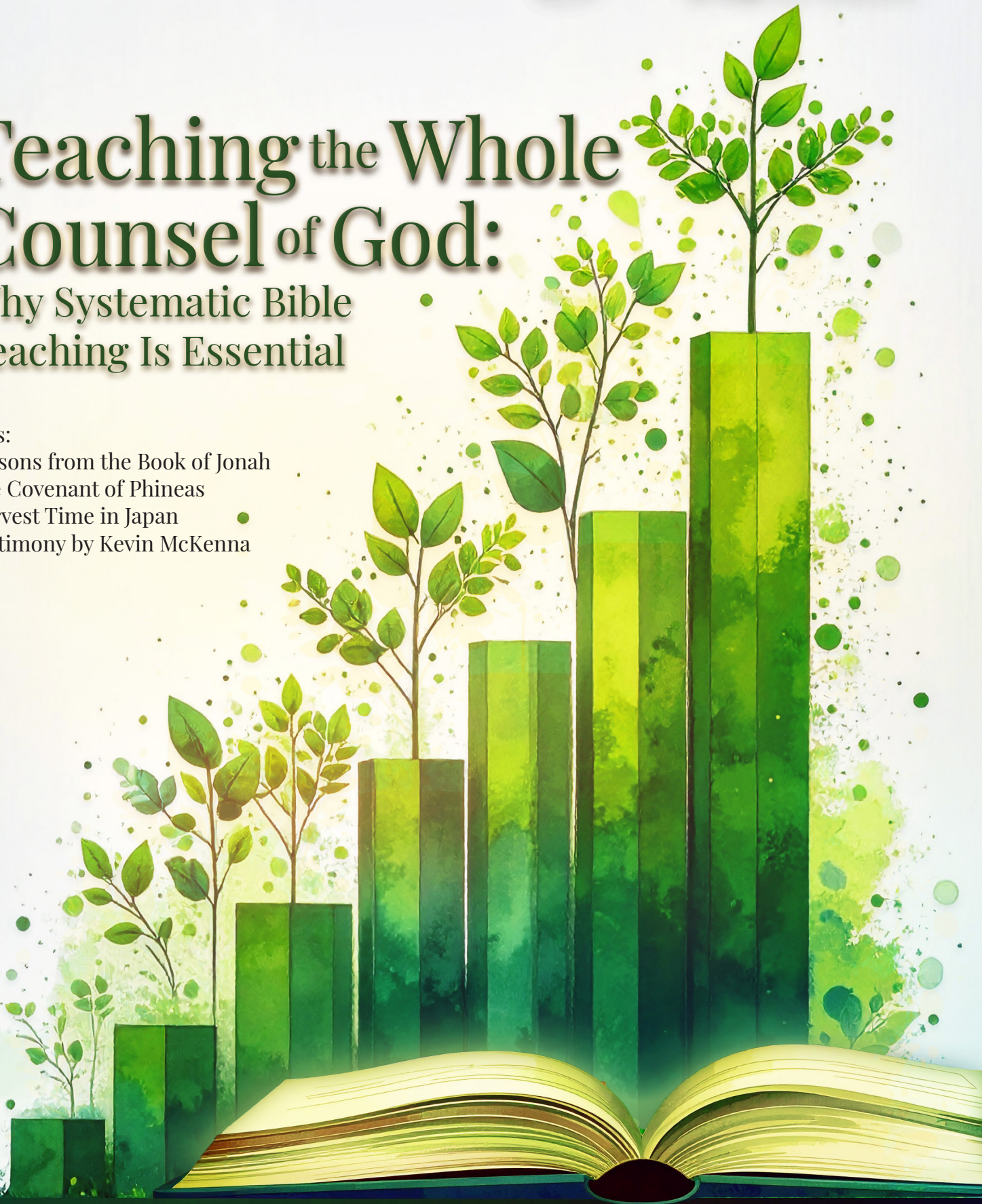
Plus:

Lessons from the Book of Jonah

The Covenant of Phineas

Harvest Time in Japan

Testimony by Kevin McKenna



THE MINOR PROPHETS HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS

ARIEL'S
BIBLE COMMENTARY

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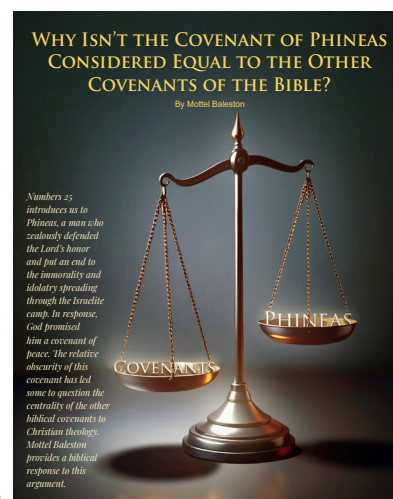
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Teaching the Whole Counsel of God:
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Purpose Statement

Ariel Ministries exists in order to evangelize Jewish people and to disciple Jewish and Gentile believers through intensive Bible teaching from a Jewish perspective.

Board of Directors:

Russell Cruzan
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Arnold Fruchtenbaum
Guy Hoffman
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Tim Sigler
Richard Storm

Publication:

Publisher

Ariel Ministries
11926 Radium Street
San Antonio, Texas 78216-2713

Editor-in-Chief

Christiane Jurik

Copy Editors

Deb Bishop, Pauline Ilsen,
Roxanne Tretheway, and others.

Contributing Writers

Mottel Baleston
Arnold Fruchtenbaum
Kevin McKenna
Tim Sigler
Andy Woods

Art Directors

Jesse & Josh Gonzales

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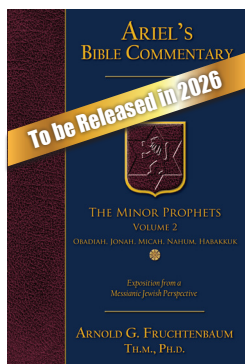
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The Ping Pong Game in Nahum 1

As I've been working through Dr. Fruchtenbaum's commentary on the Minor Prophets, one passage in particular has stayed with me: Nahum 1:2-8. This powerful text offers a striking portrait of God's character, unfolding with rhythmic intensity—like a game of ping pong, bouncing back and forth between justice and mercy. "YHWH is a jealous and avenging God," Nahum declares. "He is slow to anger and great in power. His wrath is poured out like fire—and yet—the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows those who take refuge in Him. But with an overwhelming flood, He will pursue His enemies into darkness."

You get the idea: God embodies all these attributes simultaneously. He is merciful and wrathful, powerful and patient. As Dr. Fruchtenbaum reminds us in his commentary on Nahum, to ignore or exaggerate any one of YHWH's attributes distorts our understanding of who He truly is. We must strive to know Him as He has revealed Himself—fully, faithfully, and without imbalance.



The High Holy Days of the fall season likewise reflect this multifaceted nature of God. The Feast of Trumpets will be fulfilled by the rapture of the church, a stunning display of YHWH's mercy toward His people. Yom Kippur, in contrast, represents the outpouring of divine wrath, especially during the tribulation period and particularly upon Israel. Then comes Sukkoth, a

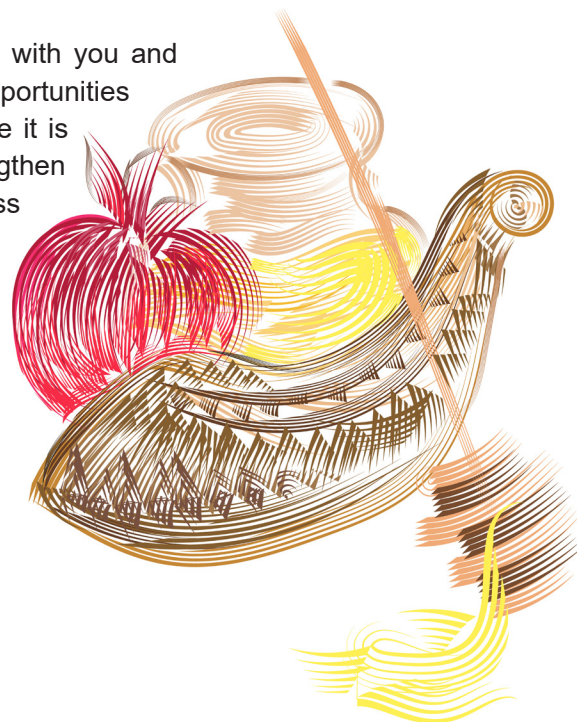
celebration of divine grace, which will be fulfilled when the God of Israel comes to dwell among His people.

At Ariel Ministries, we are praying both with you and for you that the Lord would grant you opportunities to share the good news of Yeshua while it is still day. May His Spirit guide you, strengthen you, and fill you with wisdom and boldness during this holiday season.



Christiane Jurik

Christiane Jurik, M.A.
Editor-in-Chief
Ariel Ministries
editorarielministries@gmail.com



Ariel Mission Branches & Representatives

MEET THE TEAM



ARIEL BRANCHES



Ariel Australia Chris & Lisa Savage

Website: www.ariel.org.au
Email: info@ariel.org.au

Chris and Lisa Savage represent Ariel Ministries in Australia. Based in Victoria, they teach the Scriptures from a Jewish perspective in weekly and bi-monthly classes and day seminars.



Ariel Canada Jacques Isaac & Sharon Gabizon

Website: www.arielcanada.com
Email: info@bethariel.ca

J. I. and Sharon Gabizon represent Ariel Ministries in Canada. The couple established a Messianic congregation in Montreal called Beth Ariel. The branch's multiple projects include translation work and door-to-door evangelism of Jewish homes in Montreal.



Jackie Fierman

Jackie Fierman has been with Ariel Canada since January 2005, traveling and sharing about the ministry and teaching its material in Canada and the U.S.A.



Ariel India Bakul N. Christian

Email: bakulchristian@yahoo.co.in
Bakul Christian represents Ariel Ministries in India and resides with his wife in Ahmedabad. Using Ariel's extensive teaching material, he expounds the Scriptures from a Messianic Jewish perspective in his home state. He is also responsible for the translations into the Gujarati language.



Ariel Israel Sasha & Lilian Granovsky

Website: <https://www.ariel-israel.org.il/>
Email: sashag@ariel.org

The husband-and-wife team has been representing Ariel Ministries in Israel since October 2009. They are responsible for coordinating the translation of our manuscripts and books into Hebrew and Russian.



Ariel China

For safety issues, we must protect the identity of this branch. Please keep them in your prayers.



Ariel Germany

Website: www.cmv-duesseldorf.de
Email: cmv-cmv@t-online.de

Thanks to Manfred Künstler and his wife Hanna, Ariel Ministries has had a presence in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland since 1985. In 2002, the work was passed on to Georg Hagedorn who, eight years later, developed it into a full branch. A dedicated team leads this branch today, responsible for tasks such as translating Ariel materials and organizing conferences.



Ariel Hungary Ivan & Rita Nagy

Email: hungary@ariel.org

Ivan and Rita Nagy represent Ariel Ministries in Hungary. The husband-and-wife team has developed a Come & See website in Hungarian. They host several home Bible study groups, teaching from Ariel's materials. Their goal is to make teachings available to Jewish and Gentile believers and unbelievers in Hungary.



Ariel New Zealand

Website: <http://ariel.org.nz/>
Email: info@ariel.co.nz

This branch is led by Johan Jansen van Vuuren. For information about the many activities of this branch, please contact info@ariel.co.nz.



Ariel Italy Paolo & Martina Speciale

Website: www.arielitalia.it
Email: info@arielitalia.it

Paolo and Martina Speciale represent Ariel Ministries in Italy. As a husband-and-wife team, they coordinate the translation of our manuscripts and books into Italian. Their mission is to share the Messianic Jewish perspective throughout Italy through live teaching, social media, and seminars.



Ariel Ministries Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

Email: dfw@ariel.org

This branch is devoted to teaching the Word of God from a biblical Jewish perspective in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. They also travel throughout the United States. If you are interested in hosting a teaching session, symposium, or seminar, contact them at dfw@ariel.org.



Ariel Liberia Wion & Shirley Wleh

Email: wionwleh@yahoo.com

Wion and Shirley Wleh represent Ariel Ministries in Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa. The husband-and-wife team teaches the Scriptures from a Messianic Jewish perspective in workshops, seminars, and weekly classes designed for pastors and laypersons alike.



Ariel Hawaii David and Danielle Tamala

Email: info@arielhawaii.org

David and Danielle Tamala represent Ariel Ministries in the Hawaiian Islands. They founded Ka Hale O Hamashiach, a congregation on Oahu, and have become an invaluable resource for local churches. Among their numerous projects are youth outreach programs and the organization of conferences.



Ariel UK Stephen Reynolds, Richard Mountain, and Joel Bright

Email: sreynolds@ariel.org, rmountain@ariel.org

The UK branch was established in 2025 with the primary goal of teaching the Scriptures from a Messianic Jewish perspective and distributing Ariel materials throughout the country.

ARIEL REPRESENTATIVES



Roberto Anchondo – Field Representative (El Paso, Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico)

Email: robertopmttrust@yahoo.com

Roberto Anchondo represents Ariel Ministries in parts of the Southwest regions of the U.S. and some cities in Mexico. He is currently discipling groups of men in the Jewish perspective. He also works with numerous churches in Mexico, teaching the importance of standing by Israel.



John Metzger – Field Representative (North Carolina)

Website: www.promisestoisrael.org

Email: EhbedAriel@gmail.com

Missionary and author John Metzger represents Ariel Ministries in North Carolina. He is a teacher and speaker who actively travels throughout the central and eastern part of the U.S., speaking at various churches and conferences.



Jack Nakashima – Field Representative (San Antonio, TX)

Email: jacknariel@gmail.com

Jack Nakashima represents Ariel Ministries in San Antonio, TX. Previously serving in Israel, he is now available to teach and disciple in the U.S.



Publishing Department

In the Acknowledgments of his commentary on Ezekiel, Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes:

“The book of Ezekiel is often overlooked in both churches and synagogues worldwide. In particular, Rabbinic Judaism has wrestled with what some sages have termed ‘a system of esoteric thought’ that the book is believed to present.

Indeed, Ezekiel opens with a dramatic account of the prophet’s call in 1:1–3:21. As a Levitical priest, Ezekiel’s life trajectory was expected to follow well-defined roles: preparing sacrifices, instructing the Israelites in God’s law, and adjudicating disputes. However, his path was radically altered in 597 B.C. when he was taken into exile in Babylon at

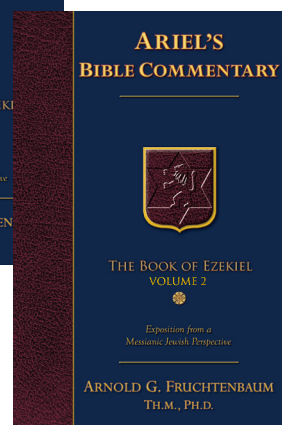
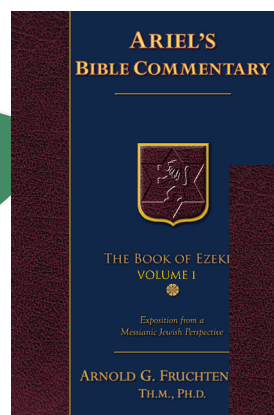
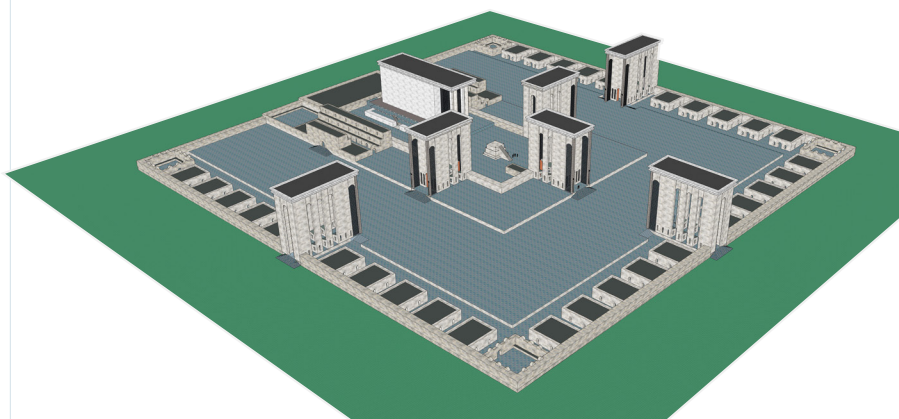
the time of the second deportation. It was in this foreign land that Ezekiel received a profound vision from the Lord—a vision he described using the limited vocabulary available to him. His account of four-faced angelic beings, moving on wheels within wheels, has long invited both fascination and speculation. Some Christian commentators have even suggested that Ezekiel witnessed extraterrestrial spacecraft. In Rabbinic tradition, this vision became known as Merkabah and served as the foundation for a branch of early Jewish mysticism that emerged around 100 B.C. and persisted into the Middle Ages.

However, Ezekiel was neither writing science fiction nor offering a guide to mysticism. Rather, he was identifying the figures in his vision as cherubim surrounding the Shechinah glory—the visible manifestation of God’s presence. To miss this

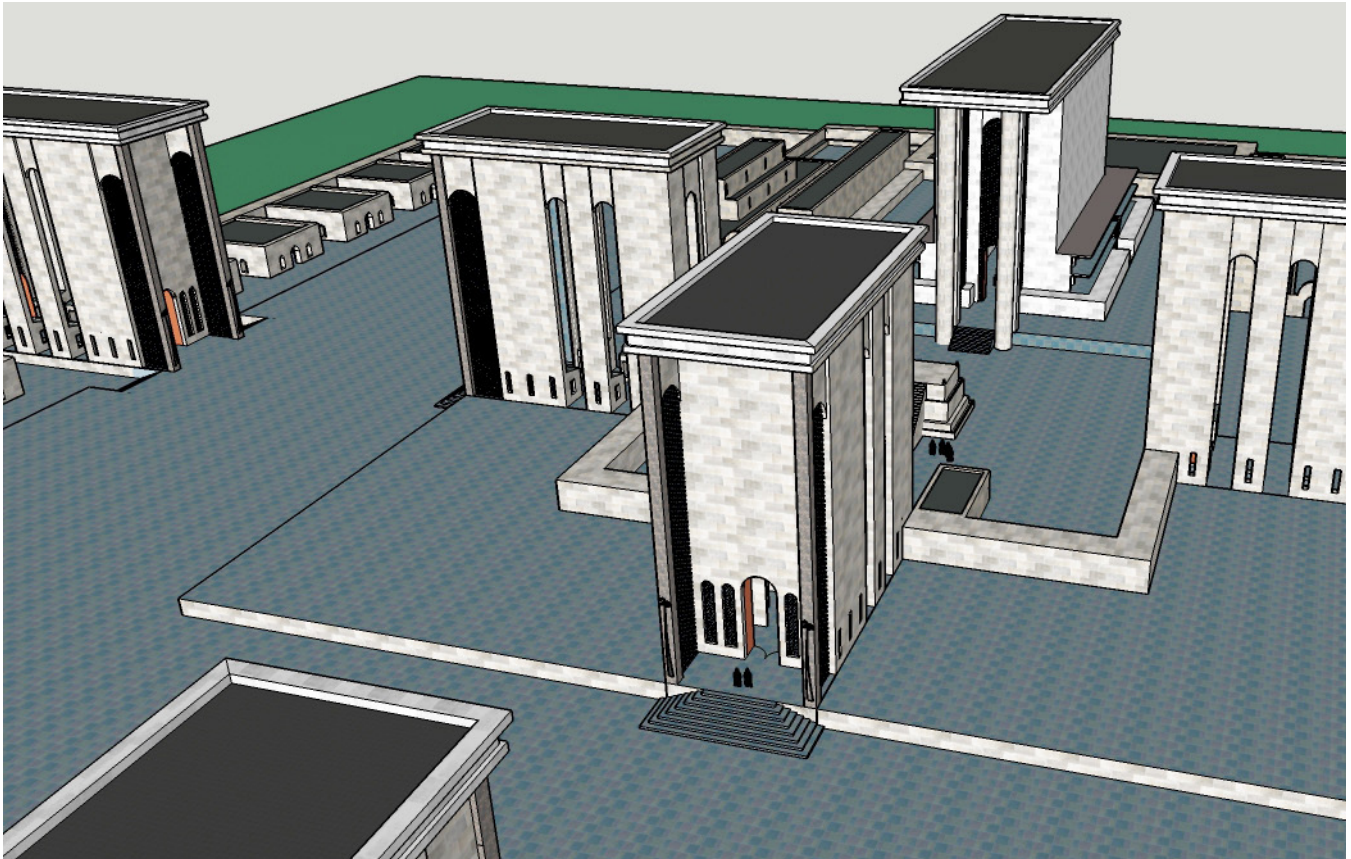
crucial point is to forfeit a profound opportunity to gain insight into the divine realm, the very heavens themselves.”¹

Another crucial aspect often overlooked in both Rabbinic Judaism and Christian scholarship is the detailed description of the Millennial Temple in Ezekiel 40–48. Even theologians who interpret other prophetic elements, such as Israel’s return to the land, literally, frequently spiritualize the Temple and its sacrificial system. Dr. Fruchtenbaum has addressed these issues thoroughly in his exposition of the relevant texts. British architect Ian Fearnley, a friend of the ministry, has based his conception of the Millennial Temple on this exegesis. We are pleased to present several of Fearnley’s original color illustrations in this article. Additional renderings, presented in grayscale, are available in the commentary.

¹Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel’s Bible Commentary: The Book of Ezekiel*, Volume 2 (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2025), p. 389.



British architect Ian Fearnley based his design of the Millennial Temple on Dr. Fruchtenbaum’s commentary on Ezekiel.



Above: Illustration of the Millennial Temple by Ian Fearnley



Ariel Hungary

We had the privilege of welcoming Vera, an 86-year-old Holocaust survivor, to our Keren Yeshua Messianic Fellowship. As Rita taught on the topics of theology, antisemitism, and the history of the Holocaust, it was a meaningful opportunity to hear Vera's personal testimony. In 1944, at the age of six, Vera and her entire family were deported from Szeged, a city in Hungary. Surrounded by six adults—her parents and grandparents—they were among the rel-

atively few whose train, known as a *Strasshof Transport*, was diverted from Auschwitz, where nearly half a million Hungarian Jews were murdered, and instead taken to Austria to perform forced labor in factories. From Vienna, they were transferred to a factory in what is now the Czech Republic, where, by God's providence, they all survived the war. Vera acknowledges the hand of God in her survival, though she has not yet recognized her Messiah. Rita visits her regularly, and they have had many meaningful conversations on this topic. Before Vera shared her story, she also listened attentively to Ivan's lecture on *The Life of the Messiah*.





Ariel New Zealand

On behalf of Ariel New Zealand, we extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported Dr. Tim Sigler's tour of New Zealand. Whether you contributed financially, prayed, attended meetings, volunteered, or helped in other ways, your involvement played a vital role in making the tour a tremendous success.

We were greatly encouraged by the warm reception and attendance at each location we visited. Along the

way, we also formed meaningful new friendships.

Dr. Sigler and his wife were captivated by the beauty of New Zealand, and despite the busy itinerary, we managed to take in some stunning sights. As a passionate photographer, Dr. Sigler often remarked, "There's a postcard around every corner."

Most of the tour was done by road, with the only flights being to Christchurch and from Queenstown back to Wellington. While in Wellington, a local supporter arranged a special meeting for the Siglers with the Israeli Ambassador to New Zealand,

where they enjoyed a multilingual conversation in Hebrew, Arabic, and even a touch of French. We also had the opportunity to tour Parliament during our time in the capital.

One of the tour highlights was Dr. Sigler serving as the keynote speaker at a conference in Te Puke, where he delivered an insightful overview of the book of Isaiah.

Plans are already in motion for a return visit by Dr. Sigler, and we look forward to sharing more once the dates are confirmed. With your continued faithful support, we are confident the next tour will be even more impactful.



Above: This photo of New Zealand sheep and all other pictures in this article were taken by Dr. Tim Sigler.



Above: Johan Jansen VanVuuren leads Ariel's branch in New Zealand.



Above: Auckland skyline at night



Above: Dr. Sigler and his wife Bernice



Above: Dr. Sigler and some of his students



Above: Dr. Sigler and Johan Jansen VanVuuren with their wives and two ministry partners

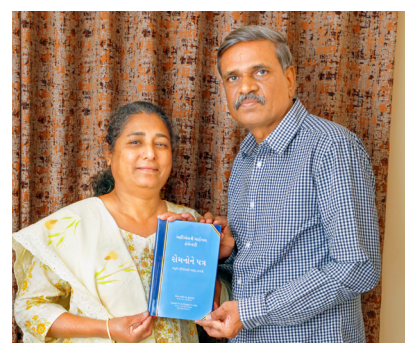


Ariel India

In May of this year, we received the shipment of the Gujarati translation of Dr. Fruchtenbaum's commentary on Romans. Many churches across our state had been eagerly anticipating the release of this valuable resource, and we have been blessed with great success in distributing copies to those who were waiting.

Brother Bipinkumar Gohil, a member of the Salvation Army in India and former church treasurer, described the commentary as "truly exceptional."

Rev. Avinash Asari, a pastor in the Gujarat Diocese of the Church of North India, considers the commentary an invaluable tool for Bible students. He shared, "Through this commentary, I have gained a clear and accurate understanding—especially of Romans 1:16 and chapters 9, 10, and 11 regarding Israel and the Gentiles." He added, "This commentary is straightforward, yet it effectively clarifies complex theological issues in the Bible, making it helpful for both new and experienced readers."



Above: Jenet and Bakul Christian presenting the Gujarati translation of Dr. Fruchtenbaum's commentary on Romans

Teaching the Whole Counsel of God:

Why Systematic Bible Teaching Is Essential

By Dr. Andy Woods



In an era when many churches prioritize topical messages, motivational speaking, or denominational distinctives, there is an urgent need to return to systematic, verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. This article explores seven key reasons why teach-

ing the Bible itself, rather than merely teaching from or about it, is essential for the health of both the church and its teachers.





Any college or seminary that seeks to honor God will strive to develop individuals who teach the Bible—not merely from it or about it, but the Bible itself. A good Bible teacher systematically moves through Scripture book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse.

This systematic approach does not diminish the value of topical studies when necessary. However, the primary diet of the church should be a structured journey through Scripture, addressing subjects and topics in the order that the Holy Spirit has placed them.

In my personal opinion, the church has been preached to death. The greatest need is for Bible teachers who faithfully instruct believers in God's Word. A systematic approach to teaching Scripture provides several essential benefits.



1. Encourages Personal Bible Reading

The first reason to teach Scripture systematically is that it promotes personal Bible reading.

A verse-by-verse approach naturally fosters engagement and anticipation. When people know the direction of the teaching, they are more

likely to read ahead. For example, if a sermon series is covering Matthew 24 and the congregation is informed that the next week's message will focus on Matthew 25, a specific reading focus is provided. Rather than receiving a general encouragement to read the Bible, believers have a clear directive, making consistent Scripture reading more likely.



2. Defends Against "Sermon Aiming"

The second reason for teaching the Bible systematically is that it serves as one of the best defenses against "sermon aiming"—the tendency to tailor messages toward specific individuals or behaviors.

A common scenario is that a pastor sees someone engaging in a certain behavior during the week—let's say they have been gossiping—and he decides to address this behavior from the pulpit next Sunday. So, he prepares a sermon on James 3 about taming the tongue, fully intending to "stick it to them."

But here is the problem: It never works. I admit that I have tried it, and every time it has backfired. The person I was aiming at either did not

show up that particular Sunday, was distracted on their mobile phone, or arrived late. Through this, the Holy Spirit has convicted me, asking whether I was going to preach His sermon or mine. In the end, God is the one who convicts through His Word—not us.

Since biblical truth naturally impacts people at a personal level, anyone in teaching ministry will, at some point, be accused of sermon aiming. Someone might say, "Pastor, you preached that because you knew about my situation!" Yet, the reality is that the pastor who systematically moves through the Word may have had no idea about their circumstance. It was simply the Holy Spirit at work through Scripture. If someone feels convicted, their issue is not with the pastor—it's with the Lord and His Word.

So, beyond the clear spiritual benefits, there are also practical reasons why pastors should commit to systematically moving through the Bible.





3. Prevents Fixating on Personal or Denominational “Hobby Topics”

The third reason for adopting a more systematic approach to Bible teaching is that it prevents falling into the trap of a proverbial “hobbyhorse.” Bible teachers and preachers tend to gravitate toward subjects that interest them the most. A well-rounded, systematic approach to theology serves as a safeguard against this tendency.

Every preacher and denomination has favorite topics. Some churches focus almost exclusively on signs and wonders, while others emphasize the sovereignty of God. In evangelistic circles, sermons often consist primarily of presenting the gospel—sometimes inaccurately—leading people to feel the need for repeated salvation experiences even after having been believers for years. If salvation could be lost and regained weekly, as some mistakenly suggest, this might make sense—but of course it cannot. If, for example, a teacher or preacher loves end-times eschatology, or the importance of a literal understanding of early Gene-

sis, or apologetics, every single sermon ever preached might deal with these specific subjects.

The pressure to emphasize denominational distinctives is ever present in the church world. These themes inevitably find their way into sermons, regardless of whether they align with the passage being taught. Likewise, personal interests can easily shape the focus of preaching, diverting attention from the actual message of the text.

A systematic approach prevents this imbalance. The weight of a topic is assigned based on the emphasis given in Scripture, ensuring that no single theme is disproportionately emphasized to the detriment of others. This holistic method naturally curbs the tendency to push personal or denominational distinctives beyond the priority given to them in the biblical text.



4. Compels Engagement with Uncomfortable Topics

The fourth reason for adopting a systematic approach is that it forces engagement with biblical subjects and topics that might otherwise be avoided.

Certain passages contain difficult or uncomfortable truths that might never be chosen as sermon topics under a more selective approach. For example, Genesis 19 recounts the incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters. Left to personal preference, few would voluntarily select such a passage for teaching. However, when systematically moving through Scripture, there is no choice but to address what is there in the chapter.

The same is true for passages like Matthew 5:31-32 or Matthew 19:7-9, which deal with divorce and remarriage. In a congregation where many have experienced divorce, these topics can feel difficult to address. Yet, systematic teaching ensures that the whole counsel of God is faithfully proclaimed, rather than avoiding passages that may be challenging. Those listening understand that nothing is being singled out or skipped over—it is simply the next passage in the text.

This discipline is essential for spiritual growth. Scripture contains teachings that challenge, convict, and stretch believers, much like a well-balanced diet is necessary for physical health. Just as a child may resist eating vegetables but needs them for proper nourishment, believers need the full spectrum of biblical truth—even the parts that may be difficult to digest.

This lack of balanced teaching explains why so many Christians today are spiritually undernourished. A steady diet of self-help messages, motivational speaking, or selective



biblical themes may make believers feel happy, but it does not produce strong, mature Christians capable of standing firm in spiritual warfare.

A systematic approach ensures theological balance. Many biblical truths exist in tension, such as the question of God's sovereignty versus human free will. Depending on personal preference, there is always a temptation to focus on passages that align with a particular theological leaning. However, both are true and both must be taught. The same principle applies to the believer's wealth in Messiah versus the believer's walk in obedience. Ephesians 1–3 emphasizes the believer's position and blessings, while Ephesians 4–6 calls for practical application. If only the latter is taught without the former, believers are sent into battle without the proper foundation.

This concept is what Paul refers to as “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26–27). Faithful teaching requires declaring all that God has revealed, rather than selectively emphasizing certain aspects while neglecting others. Yeshua Himself demonstrated this when resisting Satan's temptations in Matthew 4:4, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Every word of Scripture is inspired, and all of it is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Thus, believers cannot be fully equipped without accessing and applying the totality of God's Word.

A teaching ministry must, therefore, commit to proclaiming all of Scripture, and the most effective

way to do this is through systematic, verse-by-verse exposition.



5. Preserves Biblical Context and Mitigates Heretical Teaching

The fifth reason for training and encouraging pastor-teachers in a systematic approach is that it preserves biblical context.

It is all too easy to lose context and manipulate Scripture to say whatever one desires. Consider the following example: “Judas went out and hanged himself.” “Go and do likewise.” “What you do, do quickly.” Each of these phrases is taken directly from the Bible, yet when strung together, they create an absurd and false conclusion—one that completely misrepresents the truth.

This illustrates a key reality: all heresy is biblical. Every false teacher quotes Scripture. This is evident in so-called Christian television, where prosperity gospel preachers insist that believers are entitled to health, wealth, and prosperity because they are supposedly “little gods.” Figures like Kenneth Copeland and others frequently cite Scripture, often even more extensively than some in evangelical churches.

The problem is not the use of Scripture but its misuse—ripping verses out of context to support preexisting false doctrines. What is difficult to find, however, is a heretic who teaches the whole Bible. As soon as someone commits to working through entire books of the Bible, the amount of heresy decreases dramatically.

Why? Because systematic teaching forces engagement with the full counsel of God. When moving verse by verse through Scripture, ignored passages can no longer be avoided. A more complete picture of biblical truth emerges, making it far more difficult to sustain false doctrines.

Every written text—including Scripture—has a context. If a letter or email is received, it would be absurd to isolate the first sentence, a random phrase from the middle, and the final line to create a fabricated meaning. Yet this is exactly how many mishandle the Bible.

The three rules of real estate are location, location, location. The three rules of biblical interpretation are context, context, context. Without a systematic approach to teaching Scripture, context cannot be properly developed, leading to distortion and misunderstanding.

It is also important to acknowledge that this method may not fill auditoriums—in fact, it may have the opposite effect. A commitment to systematic teaching requires a clear philosophy of ministry that prioritizes truth over popularity. There are sound, biblical reasons for systematically presenting God's Word, and these must be kept in mind even when the results



do not align with modern expectations of church growth.



6. Brings Believers into Spiritual Maturity

The sixth reason for prioritizing systematic, verse-by-verse teaching—teaching not merely about the Bible but the Bible itself—is that it moves believers out of an arrested state of spiritual development.

Many believers remain spiritually stagnant, often without realizing it. They are saved, regenerated, and born again, yet their growth is stunted. This condition persists as long as they are in environments where Scripture is presented selectively rather than systematically.

Far too often, churches repeatedly recycle basic gospel presentations, leaving congregants in a perpetual state of spiritual infancy. While every sermon should include the gospel—since there is no certainty about who in the audience is saved—the Bible calls believers to progress beyond the basics (Heb. 6:1). The most effective way to facilitate this growth

is by exposing them to the totality of God's Word.

Job 23:12b declares: "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." Spiritual maturity is nurtured by the intake of truth. This explains why Jesus said in John 17:17, "Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth." Similarly, 1 Peter 2:2 instructs believers to "long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." Notice the emphasis on purity. A newborn cries out for nourishment, yet if its milk is diluted with anything foreign—whether water or soda—it cannot develop properly. The same principle applies to spiritual nourishment.

In the medical field, there is a clear distinction between an obstetrician and a pediatrician. An obstetrician assists in childbirth, while a pediatrician oversees a child's development. These are separate, specialized roles. Similarly, in the church, evangelists function as spiritual obstetricians, guiding people to salvation. Pastors and teachers function as spiritual pediatricians, ensuring growth and maturity.

Unfortunately, many churches fail in this second role. The result? Congregations are then filled with spiritual infants. Paul rebukes the Corinthians for this very issue in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3: "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Messiah. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are

still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?"

Infants sucking their thumbs are adorable at six months old. At sixteen years of age, it becomes a sign of arrested development. This is the condition of many in the church today. Decades pass, yet these believers remain spiritually immature, trapped in jealousy, strife, and fleshly behavior indistinguishable from the unsaved world. In fact, an out-of-fellowship believer can out-sin an unbeliever on any given day.

Church signs often boast: "We are a first-century church." The real question is: Which first-century church? Corinth? Laodicea? Many pastors today spend their ministries patching up petty disputes—disputes that would not exist if the congregation had been properly grounded in Scripture and spiritually matured.

Spiritual infancy persists not because believers lack the ability to grow but because many pastors fail to equip them. Either through insufficient training or misguided priorities, the responsibility for a congregation in an arrested state of spiritual development ultimately falls on the pastor-teacher.

A pastor who fails to prioritize the systematic teaching of Scripture condemns his congregation to spiritual stagnation. Without a commitment to verse-by-verse exposition, believers remain trapped in immaturity—unable to endure trials, stand firm in faith, or live out the fullness of their calling.



7. Delivers the Pastor-Teacher

The seventh and final reason for prioritizing systematic, verse-by-verse teaching—primarily from the pulpit, though other platforms also exist—is that it delivers the teacher.

Dr. Pentecost of Dallas Seminary once observed: “Men, you will pack out the church when you teach the Book of Revelation. But you will empty it when you teach the Book of Romans.” This statement holds true—certain biblical topics naturally draw interest, while others require spiritual endurance to grasp.

J. Vernon McGee advised young pastors to begin their ministries by teaching Romans, not necessarily because it would immediately transform their congregations but because it would transform them. This wisdom proved true in personal experience: Teaching Romans verse by verse for the first time led to more personal spiritual growth in a single year than in previous years combined. Whether or not it profoundly impacted those listening, the discipline of working systematically through Scripture brought immense spiritual benefit.

Ezekiel 3:17-19 records God’s

charge to the prophet: “Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. When I say to the wicked, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn him... that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn... he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself.”

The same commission is repeated in Ezekiel 33:7-9, reinforcing the principle that the watchman is accountable not only for what he says but also for what he fails to say. If truth is withheld, responsibility remains. However, if the message is faithfully delivered, the burden is lifted.

This responsibility extends beyond the Old Testament. Paul echoes Ezekiel’s language in Acts 20:26-27: “Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”

Paul clearly understood that teaching the full counsel of God was essential to his ministry, ensuring that no necessary truth was omitted. James 3:1 further reinforces this accountability: “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.”

Heresy is spread not only by what is taught incorrectly but also by what is left unsaid. Many churches provide solid biblical teaching, yet entire doctrines are omitted. Conversations often reveal this reality:

“I have attended this church for years, but I have never heard a sermon on Israel.”

“I have never heard a message on biblical creation.”

“I have never been taught about dispensations.”

These omissions are not accidental—they reflect a selective approach to Scripture that neglects portions of God’s Word. This is precisely what Ezekiel 3 and Ezekiel 33 warn against.

Systematic teaching removes this burden. There is no fear of omission when every passage is addressed in its proper time. The responsibility shifts entirely to those who hear, as their response to the truth is between them and God.

If accountability is required at the Judgment Seat of Messiah, there is a simple defense: “Lord, I taught through the whole Word. Every passage was addressed. The record is there.”

Teaching verse by verse, chapter by chapter, and book by book ensures that no doctrine is ignored, no difficult passage is avoided, and no responsibility is neglected. In this way, systematic teaching not only equips the congregation but also delivers the teacher from accountability for failing to declare the full counsel of God.

Conclusion

We seek to train individuals with a comprehensive understanding of the full counsel of God’s Word, equipping them to be effective in ministry



according to His design. The seven reasons to teach the Bible—and not just from or about the Bible—are:

-  It stimulates Bible reading.
-  It serves as a defense against sermon aiming.
-  It prevents fixating on personal or denominational “hobbyhorses.”
-  It compels engagement with difficult or uncomfortable topics.
-  It preserves biblical context and mitigates heretical teaching.
-  It brings believers into spiritual maturity.
-  It delivers the teacher.

May the Lord see fit to graciously give us a new generation of equipped and prepared pastor-teachers who see as their priority to teach systematically and verse by verse the whole counsel of God’s Word!



Dr. Andy Woods became a believer at the age of 16. He graduated with High Honors, earning two Baccalaureate Degrees in Business Administration and Political Science (University of Redlands, CA); obtained a Juris Doctorate (Whittier Law

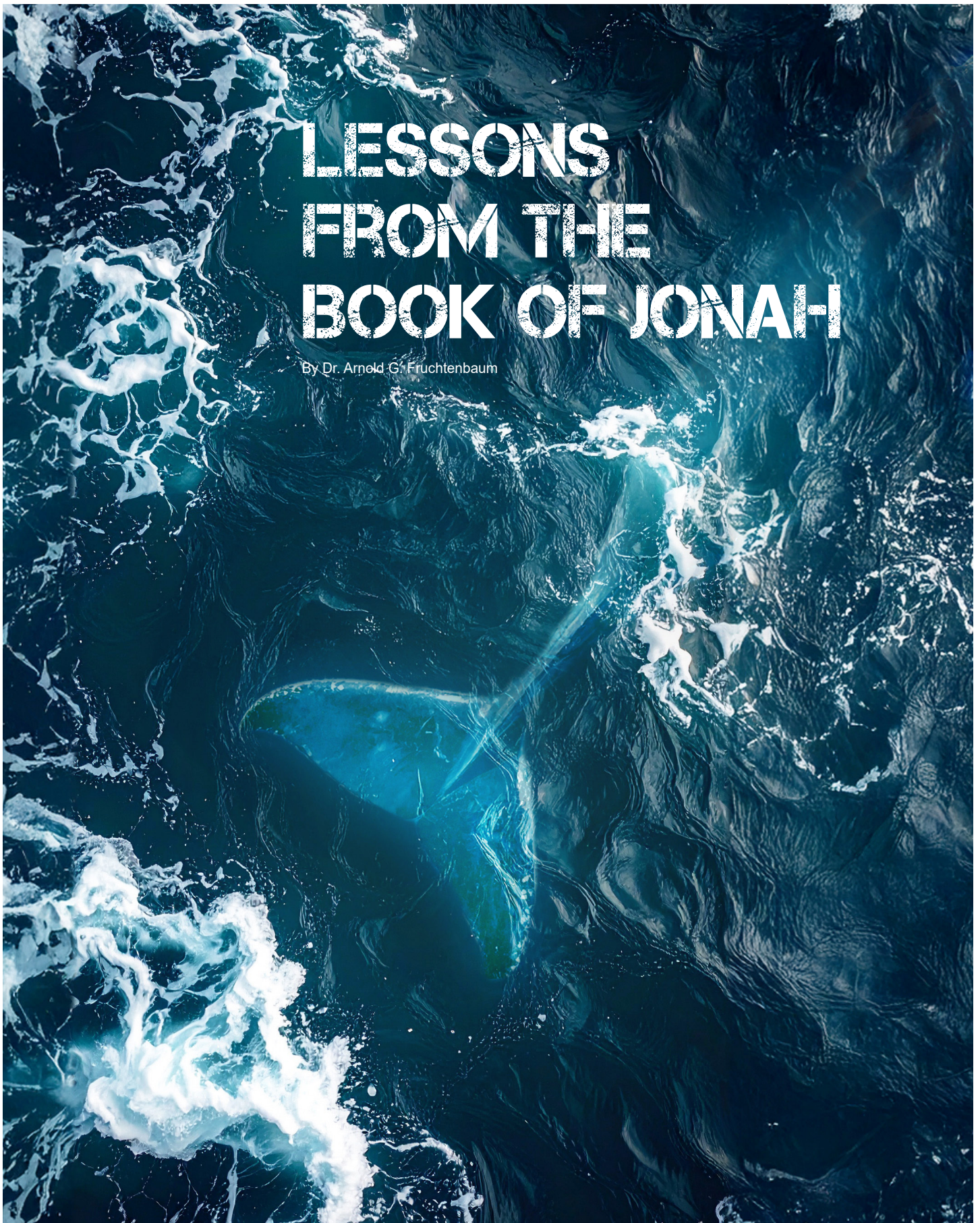
School, CA); practiced law; taught Business and Law and related courses (Citrus Community College, CA); and served as Interim Pastor of Rivera First Baptist Church in Pico Rivera, CA (1996-1998). He earned a Master of Theology degree with High Honors (2002) and a Doctor of Philosophy in Bible Exposition (2009) at Dallas Theological Seminary. In 2005 and 2009, he received the Donald K. Campbell Award for Excellence in Bible Exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary. Formerly a professor of Bible and theology at the College of Biblical Studies, Andy now serves as president of Chafer Theological Seminary and as senior pastor of Sugar Land Bible Church. Andy has contributed to numerous theological journals and Christian books and has spoken on a variety of topics at Christian conferences. Additional presentations by Andy can be found at AndyWoodsMinistries.org, SermonAudio.com, and YouTube.





LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JONAH

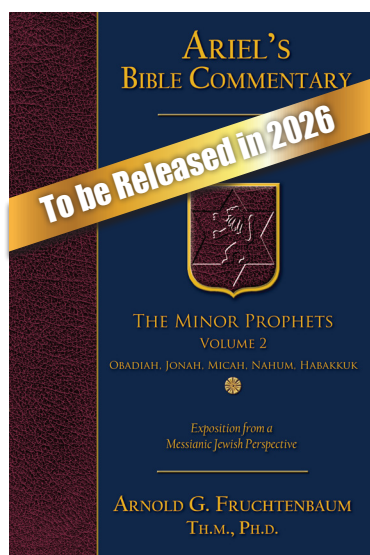
By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum





In a time when ministry success is so often gauged by numbers, budgets, or cultural impact, the book of Jonah offers a timely and needed correction. This excerpt from Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum's commentary on the Minor Prophets outlines six key applications drawn from Jonah's story.

Especially relevant to this edition's cover article is the fifth application, which reminds us that in God's eyes, it is faithfulness—not visible results—that defines true success in ministry.



Unlike many of the other Minor Prophets, the book of Jonah readily lends itself to theological and personal application. Six key themes emerge.

First, the book teaches the universality of God. YHWH is not only the God of Israel but also the God of all nations—whether they acknowledge Him or not. As Psalm 145:9 declares, "YHWH is good to all; And his tender mercies are over all his works." While much of the Hebrew Bible focuses

on God's covenant relationship with Israel, Jonah reveals YHWH's concern for the Gentile city of Nineveh even before it came into direct contact with Israel. This care anticipates the fuller revelation of God's universal reign, a truth Paul later expands in Romans 9.

Second, the book describes God's willingness to save Gentiles. Although YHWH's redemptive work in the Hebrew Bible largely centers on Israel, there are notable exceptions such as Rahab, Ruth, and now the Ninevites. Their inclusion anticipates a major purpose of the present age, namely, to take out from among the Gentiles a people for God's name (Acts 15:14). Thus, Jonah's mission illustrates YHWH's willingness to extend mercy to all who repent, regardless of ethnicity.

Third, the book reveals a pattern found throughout Scripture: the delay of divine judgment to allow time for repentance. Although judgment may be inevitable, it is not always immediate. Just as Nineveh was given forty days, so too was Israel given a grace period between her rejection of the Messiah (Mt. 12) and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. God's patience is purposeful and redemptive.

Fourth, God's discipline does not mean rejection. The book affirms that YHWH does not cast away those who believe in Him, even when they are disobedient. He disciplines them, but He does not discard them. Jonah was corrected, not abandoned. This principle applies to all believers: God's faithfulness remains even when ours falters (cf. 2 Tim. 2:13).

Fifth, Jonah's experience teaches that the results of ministry may at times defy expectations. Sometimes positive results follow reluctant obedience; at other times, faithfulness may seem fruitless. Yet, the outcome is God's responsibility. As the New Testament shows in 1 Corinthians 3:6, the believer's task is to sow the seed; God gives the increase. Faithfulness, not manipulation or outcome, is the standard of success.

Sixth, Jonah's resentment over Nineveh's deliverance serves as a warning. When we see God blessing other believers in ways we have not experienced, the appropriate response is not jealousy but gratitude for the grace we have received. God deals with each of His children according to His wisdom. Remembering our own undeserved mercy keeps us humble when others are shown grace.



Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum obtained a B.A. degree from Cedarville University in Hebrew and Hellenistics, a Th.M. degree from Dallas Theological Seminary in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies, and a Ph.D. degree from New York University upon the completion of his dissertation, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*. He is the Founding Director of Ariel Ministries and a much-respected biblical authority in evangelical and Messianic circles.

WHY ISN'T THE COVENANT OF PHINEAS CONSIDERED EQUAL TO THE OTHER COVENANTS OF THE BIBLE?

By Mottel Baleston

Numbers 25 introduces us to Phineas, a man who zealously defended the Lord's honor and put an end to the immorality and idolatry spreading through the Israelite camp. In response, God promised him a covenant of peace. The relative obscurity of this covenant has led some to question the centrality of the other biblical covenants to Christian theology. Mottel Baleston provides a biblical response to this argument.



Recently, I was told of a Christian who dismisses the continuing importance of the eight literal covenants found in the Bible by appealing to Numbers 25:10-13, which recounts the story of Phineas. In brief, Phineas proved himself to be righteous in upholding the laws of God at a time when many Israelites were compromising. As a result, God granted him an ongoing covenant. Since this covenant is little known and appears to have no effect on New Testament doctrine, the claim is made that the more familiar eight covenants of Scripture are likewise unimportant and should be set aside in favor of the two or three theoretical covenant constructs of the Reformation.

THE SPECIFIC CLAIM

Specifically, in Numbers 25, verse 12 refers to the covenant with Phineas as a covenant of peace, and verse 13 describes it as a covenant of an everlasting priesthood. The argument being put forward is that if this covenant—explicitly called a *brit* (covenant) in the Hebrew text—is to be taken seriously, then we should not treat the other eight biblical covenants (or five, if three are subsumed into the others) as preeminent or as the framework of God's unfolding plan while disregarding the covenant with Phineas.

RESPONSE

Upon reflection, there are several reasons why the two verses mentioning the covenant with Phineas should not

be regarded as equal in stature or importance to the other eight covenants.

First, unlike the other eight covenants of the Bible—each of which is accompanied by a developed discussion both in its immediate context and in later passages—there is no such development for the brief, two-verse mention of the covenant with Phineas. Nowhere else in Scripture is the outcome of the Phineas incident explored apart from a brief, passing reference in the broad historical overview of Psalm 106:30.

Second, the promise made to Phineas has no ongoing effect beyond his immediate family. This stands in stark contrast to every other biblical covenant, each of which carries far-reaching implications for all people—both Jewish and Gentile—throughout history. As one studies the successive covenants, it becomes clear that each one progressively unfolds God's plan of salvation and advances the revelation of the coming Messiah. Remove any of them and the coherence of the next becomes compromised, as each builds upon the foundation of the previous. No such continuity or theological development is present in the covenant with Phineas.

Third, the promise that Phineas's descendants would form a line of priests appears to be fulfilled through his male lineage, beginning with his son Abishua and continuing through successive generations, culminating in Zadok—a priest with a distinct and honored role in Israel's history. This genealogical line is recorded in 1 Chronicles 6:4-8.

The promise of peace and a priest-

ly line given to Phineas is certainly a noteworthy moment in biblical history, but it does not begin to approach the scope or significance of the eight other covenants, each of which has profound implications for all humanity. To argue that the obscurity of the covenant with Phineas warrants the dismissal of these overarching and foundational covenants is neither logical nor theologically sound.

CONCLUSION

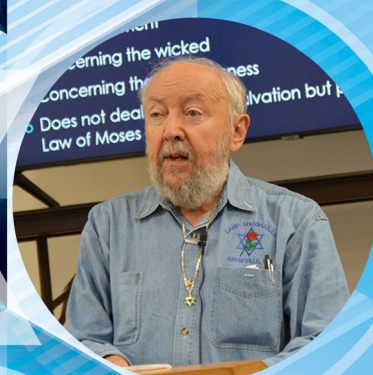
This study on the covenant of Phineas highlights the importance of not reading our own ideas into the text of God's Word—a tendency seen in various church creeds formulated during the Reformation. Instead, we must approach Scripture as careful students with no agenda. Such diligent study reveals that the eight biblical covenants have enduring relevance for all humanity. Though some have come to an end, each played a vital role in God's unfolding plan by exposing our inability to attain righteousness or approach His holiness on our own. For this reason, we echo the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:57: "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah."



Mottel Baleston is the director of the Messengers Messianic Outreach based in New Jersey (www.MessiahNJ.org).

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Ariel's Abundant Harvest

By Tim M. Sigler, Ph.D.





Time in Japan

As they drove Dr. Fruchtenbaum to the airport after his final Bible teaching conference in Japan, tears were running down his face—and tears are in my eyes now as I begin to tell you why.



In November 2023, my wife Bernice and I were returning to the U.S. through Japan and asked folks at the office in San Antonio if there might be anyone we needed to meet in Tokyo during our quick overnight stay. Immediately, we were informed about Pastor Kenichi Nakagawa, who had hosted Dr. Fruchtenbaum on teaching tours for the last twenty years. We reached out via email and were offered to meet for breakfast at our hotel near the airport. In the elevator the evening before, the Nakagawas recognized us foreigners immediately and greeted us by name. They invited us to join them for dinner—and so the conversations began. We learned about their long friendship with Dr. Fruchtenbaum and about the establishment of a parallel ministry to Ariel with remarkable spiritual fruit in a country where less than 1% of the population claims any connection to biblical faith.¹ Those who pray for the impact of Ariel Ministries around the globe will be amazed at the great spiritual harvest that the Lord has produced through a long and faithful partnership for the gospel with this unofficial branch of Ariel Ministries.

Meet Kenichi Nakagawa— The Scripture Sensei of Japan

You can read Pastor Nakagawa's testimony in his own words later in

this article, but please allow me to provide some background on this remarkable brother. During high school, he moved to California as part of a study abroad program where he fell in love with McDonald's hamburgers and made a significant contribution to the franchise's early growth in Japan. He became the purchasing manager and assistant to the president at McDonald's Tokyo. Exposed to the gospel while at university in Tokyo, he had a believing roommate who belonged to a cult-like group with misguided teachings about Israel.

Kenichi later came to faith in a local Baptist church. From the beginning of his walk with the Lord, he assumed that every Christian would have a proper understanding of Israel, but he soon became aware that this was not the case. He began to sense a call to prepare for ministry, and one of the vice presidents at McDonald's USA financed his seminary training. It's incredible now to think how that gospel investment has paid off for the body of Messiah throughout all of Japan!

Harvest Times Ministries

In 1986, Pastor Nakagawa founded Harvest Times Ministries, an evangelical Protestant mission organization that upholds and practices three pillars of biblical interpretation:

1) literal interpretation, 2) interpretation from a Messianic Jewish perspective, and 3) interpretation based on dispensational commitments.

From January 1986 to March 2010, the ministry operated as a television-based evangelistic organization and was mightily used by God. Pastor Nakagawa developed a weekly TV program that ran for thirty years before moving online in 2010 to reach an even broader audience throughout the Japanese-speaking world, now with 78,000 followers.

The ministry also founded Harvest Bible School, an online seminary whose goal it is to train the next generation of spiritual leaders. Pastor Nakagawa has developed a compelling curriculum by integrating what he learned in seminary and the teachings he received from Dr. Fruchtenbaum, tailoring them for a Japanese audience. The program consists of two parts: an introductory course (six months) and a theology course (two years). As of March 2025, the fifty-first term began—just like our fifty-first year at Camp Shoshanah.

Pastor Nakagawa has taught more than fifty classes through his ministry's online school, which now has over 1,500 graduates. From their alumni, a whole network of congregations has been planted with over seventy house churches and Bible study groups, and all are committed

¹ According to the *2021 Religious Yearbook*, published by Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs, as of December 31, 2020, the number of adherents to Christian-affiliated religions in Japan was reported at approximately 1,915,294, accounting for about 1.1% of the total population. However, this figure includes all kinds of groups from Catholics to cults (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [Mormons], and the Unification Church). When excluding these groups, the number drops to approximately 1.02 million people, which is about 0.8% of the total population. Those identifying as Roman Catholic are reported at approximately 430,000, various Protestant denominations reported 600,000, and the Eastern Orthodox Church reported 30,000. It is into this world of religious diversity and confusion that Pastor Nakagawa's ministry has had the amazing impact recorded in this article.



to a dispensational hermeneutic—teaching the Bible from a Messianic Jewish perspective largely built upon Dr. Fruchtenbaum's teaching curriculum. This network of churches is now called The Bible Forum Movement, and each of the local congregations are known as Bible Forums. Harvest Time Ministries is not a denominational body that gathers churches un-

der its umbrella but a parachurch organization that supports church planting and growth.

The Bible Forum Movement has spread from Hokkaido to Okinawa and even overseas. Some congregations meet in private homes, church buildings, or public facilities, functioning as either local churches or Bible study groups. As of April 2025,

the movement has spread to seventy locations across Japan.

Each Bible Forum is led by a graduate of Harvest Bible School and operates under the key principle of "independence and mutual support" while maintaining a cooperative relationship with Harvest Time Ministries in order to build up the universal church.

So Much Fruit from the Frucht in Japan

For twenty years, Pastor Nakagawa's ministry invited Dr. Fruchtenbaum and hosted him at their expense to teach numerous groups at various locations throughout the country. In total, there were sixteen major seminars on important themes that provided the groundwork for the training of numerous believers who would become instrumental in the growth of Harvest Bible School and The Bible Forum Movement:

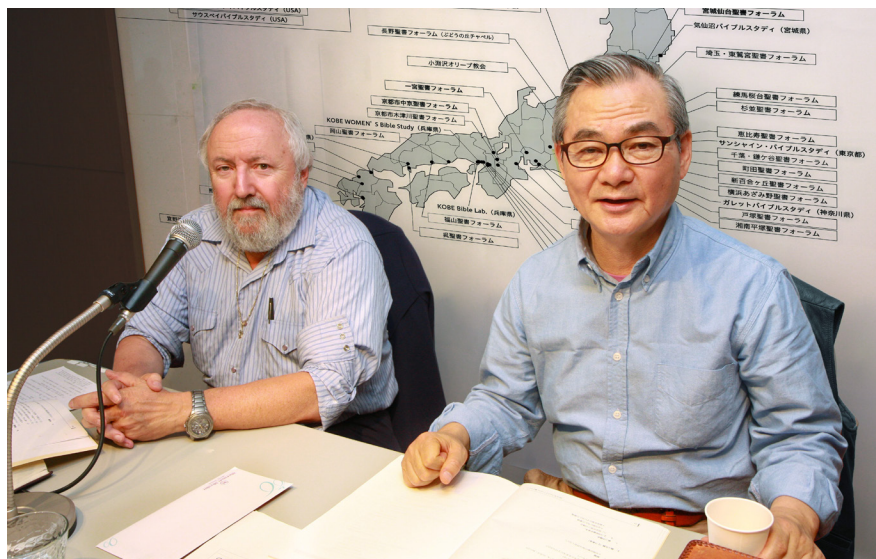
2000	The Historical Outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant
2001	Messiah Hidden in the Feasts of Israel
2002	The Eight Covenants of the Bible
2003	The Book of Revelation
2005	Highlights of the Life of the Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective
2006	Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology
2007	Messianic Prophecy and the Trinity
2008	God's Program for the Salvation of Mankind
2009	Eschatology and Israel: A Study of Romans 9–11
2010	Angelology, Satanology, and Demonology
2011	What the Bible Teaches about Salvation
2012	The Afterlife According to the Bible: A Study in Personal Eschatology
2013	What Does the Bible Teach About the Millennial Kingdom
2014	The Rapture, the Great Tribulation, and the Destiny of the Jewish People
2015	The Climax of Eschatology
2016	What is Dispensationalism? – Toward a Systematic Understanding of the Bible



And More Fruit

Pastor Nakagawa studied not only under Dr. Fruchtenbaum but also under the famous biblical geographer James Monson at the American Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem, as did Arnold. These studies have trained the pastor well to lead tours to Israel, and by now he has completed seventy-five such tours with over 2,500 Japanese Christians.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Pastor Nakagawa wrote five volumes providing a devotional teaching on each chapter of the Bible—one chapter for each day. He also wrote a bestseller that is available in popular bookstores throughout Japan, introducing Jesus as the Jewish Messiah to the Japanese people. He and his wife Fumie have four children, who are all involved in the work of Harvest Time Ministries. Their son Hiroshi lives in Tustin, California, near the former offices of Ariel Ministries where he leads their USA branch. Like his visionary father, Hiroshi



Above: Dr. Fruchtenbaum and Pastor Nakagawa in Japan

prays that the Lord will use him to have an even greater impact through the use of the internet and to expand the reach of Harvest Time Ministries and Ariel Ministries to even more Japanese speakers.

Hiroshi recalls, "I remember driving a rental car for our first visit to Camp Shoshanah in April 2011 with my father and my brother Nozomu. We saw the dining hall under construction." Later that year, Harvest Time Ministries provided \$70,000 to support the

publication of the multivolume work *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*. The following year, in December 2012, they sent a total of \$140,000 from Japan and \$10,000 from their USA branch to assist with the building project at Camp Shoshanah. A cabin is named *Sakura* ("cherry blossom") in appreciation of their partnership. To this day, they continue to support the global efforts of Ariel Ministries with generous monthly gifts.



Above: Dr. Fruchtenbaum surrounded by his students in Japan



Above: Pastor Nakagawa translating for Dr. Fruchtenbaum in Japan

Fruit in Partnership

As an example of Harvest Time's partnership with Ariel Ministries, our friends in Japan have translated and published the following books: *Messianic Christology* (released as an eBook in February 2016 and 1,250 print copies in April 2016), *Introduction to Hebrew Christianity* (released as an eBook in June 2014 and 1,050 print copies in May 2016), and *Israelology* (a partial translation as an eBook in May 2018 and 1,350 print copies in April 2018).

The philosophy of The Bible Forum Movement is encapsulated in a lion logo featuring four key elements: 1) a parchment scroll representing the Word of God; 2) Genesis 1:1 written in Hebrew emphasizing the Jewish roots of Scripture; 3) a lion standing beside the scroll symbolizing the Messiah, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; and 4) the partnership with Ariel Ministries. As Pastor Nakagawa held this movement's emblem with the lion logo, he explained that it is called the *Frucht-chan* (-chan is a diminutive ending often used endearingly for children). They have such affection for their favorite Jewish Bible teacher! When I shared some of these stats with Dr. Fruchtenbaum,

he said with a twinkle in his eye, "I was born in Asia—Siberia, Russia."

Pastor Nakagawa pointed at the map and photos of their many ministry leaders and said, "This is Dr. Fruchtenbaum's Fruit" from ministering for twenty years in Japan! I can't stop the tears when I think of the impact of Dr. Fruchtenbaum's faithful teaching of the Word and the fruit it has produced in so many lives.

Jewish Japan and Japanese Fruit

According to the Jewish Community of Japan's website, "Jews have been living in Japan since at least the 1860s, perhaps much, much longer. The first settler we know of in modern times arrived in Yokohama in 1861, and synagogues were later established in Nagasaki (1889), Kobe (1937), and finally Tokyo (1953)."² In an article in *The Japan Times* titled "How the Jewish Community Found a Home in Japan," I learned about the Jewish-American banker and philanthropist Jacob Schiff (1847–1920), who helped finance Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905.

During my first teaching tour in 2024, Bernice and I met the friendly rabbi for the Jewish Community

of Japan in Tokyo. As we visited in Hebrew and in English and learned that we had all previously lived in Mevaseret Zion in Israel, the rabbi was very eager to also share with us a fascinating artifact of Jewish history in Japan, a Japanese translation of the Talmud. A local Japanese friend of the community was so intrigued by what he had learned from his Jewish friends that he wanted to know more about their culture, literature, and values, so he translated the Talmud into Japanese. Today, Japan's Jewish population is estimated at between 2,000 and 4,000.

More Fruit to Come

Recalling our first meeting with the Nakagawas in the hotel, our dinner conversation went something like the oral examination for an ordination candidate: What do you teach about this passage and that passage? We are having confusion among believers on this subject and that subject;



Above: Hiroshi Nakagawa

² "Our History," *Jewish Community of Japan* (2022), accessed on May 30, 2025, <https://jccjapan.jp/our-history/>.



how would you help them? How do you address this challenge and that challenge? We visited that first evening for over two hours and again for another two hours over breakfast the next morning. At the conclusion of this rigorous theological vetting, Pastor Nakagawa said, "You need to come teach in Japan, and sooner than later!"

Since our first teaching visit in February 2024, when I answered some of their questions by pointing them to the Ariel Ministries doctrinal statement, they began to consider establishing such a statement for their forum. They completed their statement later that year based on the Ariel statement, and it became effective January 1, 2025. Pastor Nakagawa commented, "It is biblical, precise, and practical."

As Bernice and I toured the headquarters of Harvest Time Ministries near Mount Fuji this past February, Pastor Nakagawa showed us numerous photos of their amazing students and shelves full of Dr. Fruchtenbaum's books, recordings, and teaching materials. As he, his family, and members of their team led the tour through their impressive operations, he said again, "This is Dr. Fruchtenbaum's Fruit" from ministering for twenty years in Japan. Pastor Nakagawa also shared that just as he had translated for Dr. Fruchtenbaum for the last twenty years, with our teaching tour in 2025, his son Hiroshi would begin to translate for me as they pray for the next twenty years of cooperation with Ariel Ministries in Japan.



Testimony #1

I was raised in an atheist household and remained an atheist until my second year of university. In 1967, at the age of twenty, I was invited to a local church by a Christian friend. That church emphasized the importance of Israel. In June of that year, the Six-Day War broke out in the Middle East, and the congregation at the church was in a frenzy. The war ended in just six days, and the members were greatly relieved. That autumn, the church hosted a lecture by Moshe Bartur, the Israeli ambassador to Japan at the time. Since no suitable interpreter could be found, the responsibility was unexpectedly assigned to me—a twenty-year-old unbeliever.

Ambassador Bartur spoke on Ezekiel 37:1–14, declaring, "The founding of the modern State of Israel is the fulfillment of this prophecy." Before I even became a Christian, I had already encountered glimpses of a biblical worldview, biblical history, and a theology of Israel. Looking back now, I see this as nothing but the grace of God.

Though I learned about Israel's importance at that church, it was at another church that I heard the gospel and made the decision to believe in Jesus Christ. After I was saved, I was surprised to discover that not every Christian was interested in Israel. In the church where I was saved, the subject of Israel was rarely, if ever, mentioned. However, my own interest in Israel never faded.

After graduating from university, I worked in the business world for six years. At the age of twenty-nine, I decided to become a pastor and enrolled at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, located just north of Chicago. There, I received biblical training to become a pastor. As expected, however, there was no teaching on Israelology. Even during my time abroad, my passion for Israel remained strong. In 1979, after graduating from seminary, I returned to Japan and began pioneering a church in Machida City, Tokyo. In 1986, I founded Harvest Time Ministries and began to devote myself fully to this work.

A major turning point came in July 1989 at the Lausanne II Congress on World Evangelization, held in Manila. The event brought together around 4,300 participants from 173 countries, and I was one of them. During the congress, I happened to attend a session of LCJE (Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism). There I encountered about thirty leaders of the Messianic Jewish movement. This experience helped expand my spiritual vision.

After that, I began reading publications from several Messianic Jewish organizations. Among them, I was especially moved by the teachings of Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum. I began to hope that one day I could invite him to Japan.

That dream became a reality in 2000, when we held our first full seminar with Dr. Fruchtenbaum. The topic was the Abrahamic Covenant. Although his English is said to be difficult even for native speakers, I was able to interpret him simultaneously with considerable accuracy from the very beginning. I believe the Lord helped me. As I interpreted, I became deeply convinced: his teachings, based on a Hebraic perspective, were biblical, logical, and practical. Watching the audience eagerly absorb his teaching, I felt certain—this is exactly what Japanese Christians need.

The Fruchtenbaum Seminars continued annually until 2016. The blessing that he brought to Christians in Japan is immeasurable. I take great pride in having been able to introduce his teaching to Japan.

The fruit of his teaching has been the birth of the Harvest Bible School and the Bible Forum movement. A community that upholds dispensationalism and interprets the Bible literally has emerged in Japan and continues to grow. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Fruchtenbaum and to Ariel Ministries, which has sent him out. May all glory be to the Lord!

Kenichi Nakagawa,
Pastor



Testimony #2

I learned so much through the “Dr. Fruchtenbaum Seminar” hosted by Harvest Time Ministries. Through the study titled “What the Bible Teaches About Salvation,” I was able to gain a clear understanding of the true nature of salvation. The teaching on “Life After Death” also brought clarity to what had previously been vague and uncertain for me.

By studying eschatology, I came to understand in detail the sequence of events, including the Rapture, the Great Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ to the earth, the Millennial Kingdom, and the Eternal Order. As a result, I now hold a firm and living hope.

Above all, I am especially grateful that I have come to understand the Bible—written by Jewish people—from a Jewish perspective. Concepts that were difficult to grasp due to geographical, cultural, and traditional differences have now become understandable and convincing.

Moreover, understanding the Abrahamic Covenant has given me a

clearer view of God's plan and the overarching flow of the entire Bible.

Through many “scales falling from the eyes” moments, what once seemed difficult in the Bible now feels much more familiar, and I have come to feel the Lord's presence more deeply and closely.

Tetsuo Sakaki, Elder

Azamino Bible Forum, Yokohama



Testimony #3

I was formerly a Buddhist. In February 2007, I visited a church for the first time and was puzzled by the message on John 14:6. Intending to refute Christianity, I began attending the regular meetings of Harvest Time Ministries.

My heart was deeply stirred by Pastor Kenichi Nakagawa's expository messages on the Gospel of Matthew, and in February 2008 I responded to the invitation. Yet, the decisive conviction came in April of that same year through Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum's seminar entitled “God's Program for the Salvation of Mankind.” I was profoundly moved by the truths



of dispensationalism as explained by Dr. Fruchtenbaum, a Jewish believer. I was overwhelmed by the greatness of God's redemptive plan and was baptized in November.

From Dr. Fruchtenbaum, I also learned the importance of reading the Bible with an awareness of the "three gaps": cultural, geographical, and historical. This approach has made the Scriptures come alive to me in new and powerful ways.

His teaching—both logical and spiritual—continues to nourish and deepen my faith to this day.

Futoshi Nagayama, Elder
Ebisu Bible Forum, Tokyo



Testimony #4

Although I have always wholeheartedly believed in the truth of the Bible, I struggled with the apparent contradictions in its text for a long time. This was a major issue in my faith journey. However, about twenty-five years ago, when Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum held a seminar on "The Life of the Messiah" in Sapporo, most of those issues were resolved and my spiritu-

al vision was greatly expanded.

Two years later, at the "Eight Covenants" seminar hosted by Harvest Time Ministries, I clearly understood the relationship between the Mosaic Law and myself, and it felt as though a heavy burden had been lifted from my shoulders. That marked the beginning of my study of the Bible from a Hebraic and dispensational theological perspective.

In 2004, I participated in Dr. Fruchtenbaum's Israel tour. It was also a time of trial—I had my wallet stolen in Jerusalem and suffered a muscle tear in my leg in Caesarea Philippi—but through it I gained invaluable experiential learning of the Bible.

In 2008, I shared with Pastor Nakagawa my desire to bring this learning to Sapporo. Pastor Nakagawa spoke of establishing a Bible School based on this theology and expanding it nationwide as a discipleship movement. That same year, the Bible School was launched. I enrolled as a member of its first class, and in November of that year, the Sapporo Bible Forum began.

Dr. Fruchtenbaum has visited Japan every year and conducted seminars. The teachings he has provided—interpreted faithfully by Pastor Nakagawa—have become a great treasure for us. Today, Bible Forums have spread to many regions. In the fellowship of deep Bible study and warm community, we eagerly await the day when we meet our Lord Jesus at the rapture.

Masahiro Kibayashi, Elder
Sapporo Bible Forum, Hokkaido



Tim M. Sigler (Ph.D., Trinity International University) is CEO of Ariel Ministries and serves as President of Ariel College of the Bible and Messianic Jewish Studies. He loves teaching the Bible on location and

hosts study tours throughout the biblical world with Wisdom Passages. Through his extensive travels in Israel and the Middle East, he seeks to equip his students with an understanding of the historical and cultural world of the Bible, the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, and the ongoing role of Israel in God's redemptive plan.



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To the Jew First

By Kevin McKenna

In this testimony, Kevin McKenna—formerly a member of Ariel New Zealand—shares the story of his salvation and how it opened the door to a fruitful ministry among Israeli backpackers.



"Growing up, I never thought of Jesus as being Jewish."



I am from New Zealand and was baptized into the Catholic Church as an infant in 1938. For a long time, I fully expected to die a Catholic. As a boy, I regularly confessed my sins on Saturdays so that I could receive communion in a “state of grace” on Sunday.

Growing up, I never thought of Jesus as being Jewish. To me, He was simply a Catholic boy living in the Holy Land. It wasn’t that I rejected His Jewishness—I had just never paid attention to it. That changed when I heard Dr. Fruchtenbaum teach. For the first time, I was confronted with the historical and biblical reality: Jesus was, and is, a Jew.

As a sinful boy—and later, a sinful man—I believed I needed a priest nearby at all times to hear my final confession before death. That last confession, I was taught, would keep me out of hell and ensure I would at least end up in purgatory.

The Beginning

In mid-1987, following a series of self-inflicted disasters, I found myself alone and broken in a Catholic church in a small South Island town. It was about six o’clock in the morning when I clearly heard Jesus speak to me: “You are loved.” I knew without a doubt that it was Him. I was overwhelmed with hope. Jesus loved me.

Not yet knowing where to turn, I remained in the Catholic Church and began attending a parish where my cousin served as priest. However, over the next few years, I drifted into New Age practices, searching for

God in all the wrong places. I mentioned this to my cousin, and my impression was that he thought it was all acceptable.

Yet even in that confusion, I received what I can only describe as divine messages and insights—moments that challenged my thinking and began to stir something deeper within me. One such moment came in late 1990. A friend, Wayne, and I traveled to Austin, Texas, to attend a conference featuring some of the most prominent figures in the New Age movement, including Ram Dass and Fred Alan Wolf. We were supposed to stay at the home of the event organizer, a woman who ran a New Age business in Austin aimed at helping people live better lives.

When we arrived, she drove us to her home in the hills above the city. During the drive, she informed us that she was in the process of ending her sixth marriage and could no longer accommodate us, as her husband was still living there. Later, as I stood on the balcony of her house, it suddenly hit me: This woman, so prominent in the New Age world, had a life in disarray. In that moment, I saw clearly how empty and misguided the New Age path was. There were no real answers for me there.

My friend and I never attended the conference. The next day, we left Austin for Los Angeles and soon returned to New Zealand. After that, I cut ties with the New Age community—though, at the time, I still kept all the books and materials. And through it all, God remained incredibly patient with me.

God’s Messenger

Then my time came...

In 1993, I was living in Palmerston North, a city in the southern half of New Zealand’s North Island. I was preparing for what I thought would be an interesting debate with a Christian woman about the nature of humanity. That woman was Karin—God’s messenger. She quite literally arrived on my doorstep.

I was living alone in a four-bedroom house and had decided to take in a boarder. Karin responded to the advertisement I had placed in the local paper. She had recently returned to New Zealand after a time in England and had been house-sitting for a Christian couple. With the owners returning to their home, she needed to find new accommodation.

As she walked into the hallway, she told me she was a believer. Noticing my three large bookcases, lined with numerous New Age titles in their colorful covers, she felt she should disclose her faith in case I was hostile toward Christians. I told her I had no issue with that, explaining that I was Catholic and tolerant of all religions. She responded that she, too, had been raised Catholic.

She looked over the house and said she would let me know. The next day, she phoned to say she would *not* be taking the room. I did not re-advertise.

A couple of weeks later, Karin phoned again. If the room was still available, she said she would take it. I was her last resort—she hadn’t found anywhere else. So she moved in.



We got along well. We had great conversations and plenty of laughs.

The Great Debate

Then came the *great debate* on the state of man. I was confident, ready to overwhelm her with an intellectual onslaught. I began by explaining my belief that all people are inherently good and that we go astray only because of environmental conditioning.

She looked me straight in the eye and, slowly and deliberately, said: “Inherently good? That’s not what God says.”

For some reason, that statement stopped me in my mental tracks. I had no real knowledge of the Bible and had no comeback. But something about her words struck me as important and worth exploring. So I said, “So what *does* God say?”

Jeremiah 17:9

She opened her Bible and read Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” I had heard that phrase before. In my early thirties, I had come across a newspaper article in a national publication. The author claimed that humanity would never stop waging war and killing each other because the human heart was desperately wicked. I remember how completely I had rejected that idea. It seemed hopeless, and I dismissed it outright.

Now, years later, I was hearing it again, but this time, God had prepared me to receive it. I had spent



Above: Kevin McKenna and his wife Karin

years reading biographies of political and business giants—Robert Caro’s *The Years of LBJ*, *Titan* on John D. Rockefeller, David McCullough’s *Truman*. I studied the lives of the powerful, read of their triumphs, and their compromises. I devoured books on master criminals, military history, and great generals. Beyond all that, I was something of an expert on my own sinfulness...

In that moment, the debate ended. Jeremiah 17:9 had changed my worldview, and I was undone. In an instant, I *knew* several things: I was desperately wicked. The world was desperately wicked. The Bible was right, and it was true. Everything I had recited as a child in the Apostles’ Creed—about Jesus being the Son of God and my Savior—was absolutely true. Salvation wasn’t earned by being good, and I wasn’t very good at that anyway.

I also knew, in that same moment, that I would not die a Catholic. Karin,

who would later become my wife, says I went as white as a ghost. She knew God was working. Quietly, she handed me a small booklet titled *Just Grace* and then left me alone.

I sat there, reading the booklet more than once. Then I made my decision.

Inside the booklet, I wrote that I renounced my membership in the Roman Catholic Church and its teachings and accepted God’s gift of Jesus as my personal Savior.

I was forgiven.

I was saved.

Cleaning Out the Stables

The next morning, I woke up with a clear message in my mind—God’s voice saying, “Clean out the stables.” I knew exactly what it meant.

When Karin came out of her room, she found the hallway lined with rubbish bags filled with New Age books, about \$4,000 worth of astrology

software, New Age artwork that had been on my walls, my rosary beads, and other Catholic items. All of it was taken to the dump. Karin hadn't said a word to me about removing those things. God had.

Karin later shared her own story with me. She had been baptized as an infant and raised Catholic, just like I had. But around 1972, while living at the YMCA in Wellington, a Christian girl gave her a copy of *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey. After reading it, Karin surrendered her life to Jesus. She went to speak with the priest at the Wellington Basilica, where she had been attending Mass, and told him what had been revealed to her. She asked him directly, "Why didn't the Church tell me the truth about salvation?"

He looked at her and replied, "You have lost the faith of your fathers," then turned his back and walked away.

Karin and I both knew God had brought us together. We were married in March 1994—31 years ago.

We began attending her previous church, and I was expecting solid Bible teaching. However, after about six months, I realized I was learning very little.

A Messianic Jew Coming to Town

Karin had told me that if a Messianic Jew ever came to town, we should go hear him. She had encountered teachers like Lance Lambert during her time in England and had been deeply blessed.

Then, one day in 1994, I saw a small advertisement in the local paper: a Messianic Jew named Arnold Fruchtenbaum was coming to Palmerston North to give six sessions on *Prophecy and the Jew*. We went.

Those sessions opened my eyes in a profound way. I gained clarity on God's relationship with Israel and the Jewish people. I saw God's plan unfold from Genesis to Revelation, and as I read Scripture, I began to understand how it all fit into the larger picture that Dr. Fruchtenbaum had drawn. I still have that original newspaper ad pasted inside my copy of *Jesus Was a Jew*, which I purchased at that very meeting in 1994.

Since then, Karin and I have attended many week-long camps



Above: Dr. Fruchtenbaum enjoying a meal with his students in New Zealand



Above: Karin McKenna and one of her Israeli guests

with Dr. Fruchtenbaum across New Zealand, as well as his teaching sessions whenever he came to Palmerston North or nearby cities. What a first teacher to have!

Outreach – To the Jews First

We spoke to many Christian friends and pastors about Dr. Fruchtenbaum's teaching and told them when he would next be coming to New Zealand. Yet we received little positive response.

We often wondered why God was giving us such rich and biblically sound teaching, while so few seemed interested in hearing about it. So we began hosting Ariel-based Bible studies in our home, inviting family and friends.

We prayed frequently about the lack of interest. Then one day, a thought came to me: "When the teacher is ready, the students will come."

I shared with Karin what I sensed in my spirit: "God will bring them to our door."

In late 1999, we heard that another Messianic Jew was coming to town—Jacob Damkani of *Trumpet of Salvation to Israel*, based in Israel. We attended his meeting, where he shared about his evangelistic work in the land.

At the end of his presentation, he introduced another Israeli, Omri Jacobovitch, who was based in New Zealand. Omri shared his vision: to have New Zealand believers open their homes to some of the 7,000 mostly young Israelis who travel to New Zealand each year after completing their military service. He explained that offering hospitality would create natural opportunities to share with them something of their Messiah.

Karin and I looked at each other and said: "Wow—they *will* come to our door." And they did.

We were among the first to sign up as HIT (Hosting Israeli Travelers) hosts. From 2001 until the COVID-19 pandemic, we hosted around 160 Israeli guests in our home, most arriving in ones and twos.

Well-Prepared by Good Teaching

We remain in contact with several of our guests and continue to pray that the seeds planted in New Zealand will take root and bear fruit for God's kingdom. From the moment they knocked on our door, the Holy Spirit was at work. We never had to initiate a spiritual conversation—they *always* did. They would ask, "Why do you love us when the world hates us?"

One Israeli told us he had stayed with about six HIT hosts during his travels around New Zealand. He described it as an incredible experience. What he heard about Yeshua and Christianity at his first host's home was remarkably continued by the next host, as if each one picked up the story right where the previous one had left off. This happened at every stop, he said. He acknowledged that he felt God was at work, and we wholeheartedly agreed.

It was a beautiful ministry to be a part of. Dr. Fruchtenbaum's teaching and the many resources from Ariel Ministries—books, DVDs, CDs, and tapes—had prepared us well for it.

Praise God.

Thank you, Ariel Ministries.

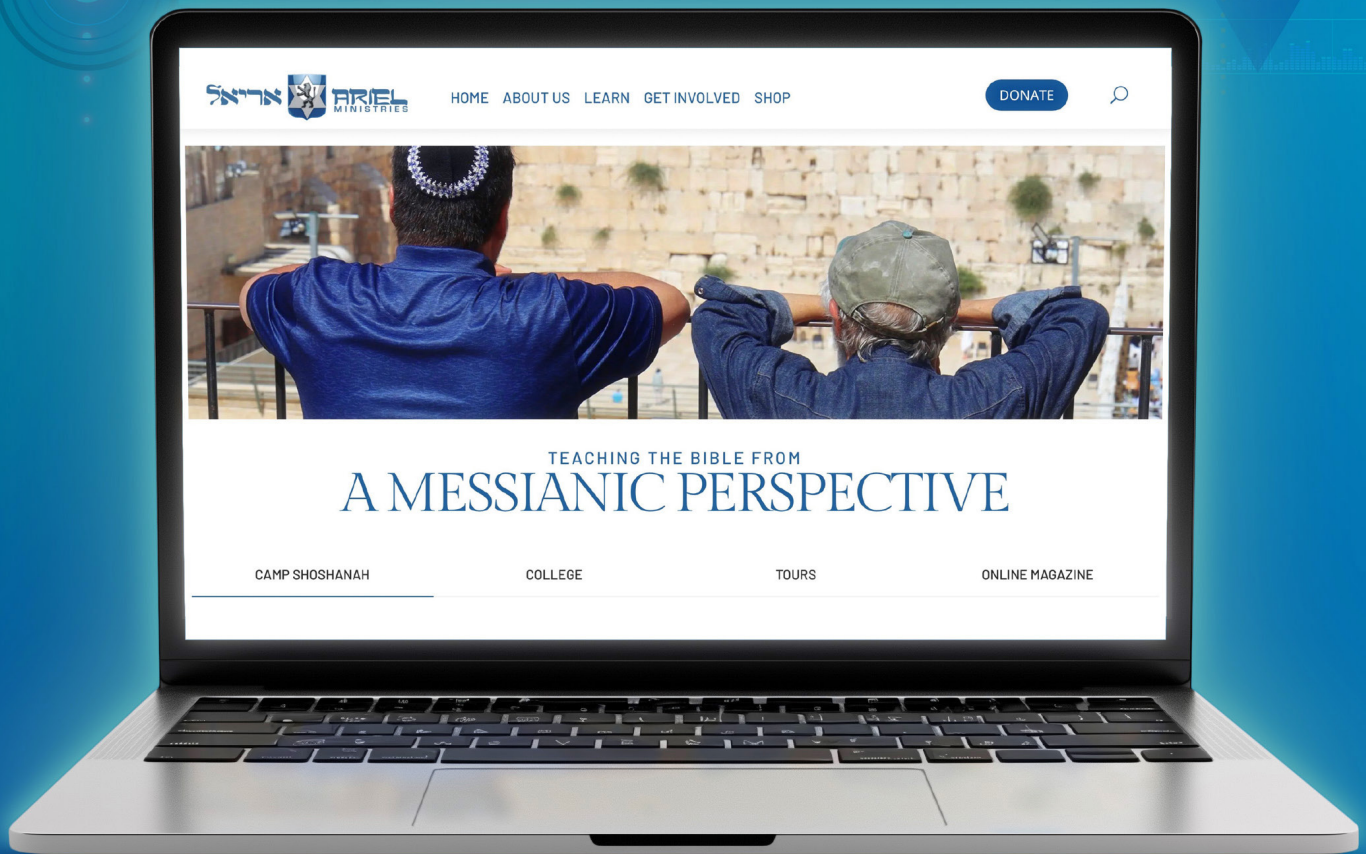
Thank you, Dr. Fruchtenbaum.

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ARIEL MINISTRIES

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